

Press Facts

Quality assurance in aluminum strip production

Interactive cross-process evaluation of product quality – QuinLogic receives software order

Hydro to implement comprehensive quality management system at Grevenbroich works.

Aachen, Germany, February 10, 2010 – Hydro, Europe’s number one aluminum producer, has placed orders with Cognex and QuinLogic to supply new quality assurance systems for the company’s Grevenbroich facilities. By installing the new Cognex surface inspection systems and data integration software from QuinLogic, Hydro is realizing far-reaching plans for interactive quality optimization.

With the objective to further enhance the quality of its outgoing products Hydro will equip two additional process lines at its Grevenbroich works with new surface inspection and quality evaluation software. The systems will check the quality of the strip right before the dispatch to the final customers, in the majority customers from the automotive industry.

The products must not be released for shipment to the customer unless also quality data from process steps upstream of the strip coating process are taken into account, as even minute deviations in upstream stages may affect the quality of the final product. The interactive strip protocol developed by QuinLogic combines data from upstream process steps, providing a reliable basis for a holistic approach to strip quality assessment and for the “ship or block” decision.

The evaluation is an interactive, cooperative process involving several people who assess the quality based on different criteria in a successive process. This will from now on be supported, consolidated and documented by a dedicated software solution.

Being a forerunner in the field of surface inspection of strip, Hydro has inspection systems in use for more than ten years, especially for products delivered to automotive customers and for coated aluminum strip. It is now necessary to replace the existing systems with new ones in order to be able to fulfil the increasingly exacting requirements on the quality of aluminum strip. Based on the very positive experience with the inspection system installed at its Hamburg facilities, Hydro has again chosen technology from Cognex.

QuinLogic will adapt its proven QualityMonitor software to meet the specific conditions at the Grevenbroich mill. This will include the development of new evaluation modules which will be integrated into Hydro’s production control system together with the Cognex SmartView system.

For Friedrich Lücking, one of the founders and managing director of QuinLogic, confirms the outstanding capabilities of the QuinLogic software concept. "With our software it is possible to handle and combine quality data from different process steps – until recently an unsolvable problem for many users. Now it has become an easy job for our customers to evaluate the quality of complete strips reliably and across several production stages. This order from such a prominent manufacturer of surface inspection systems as Cognex for a system that will be used by a world leading manufacturer of rolled products is a further proof for us that we are on the right track."

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Figure 1: The QuinLogic QualityMonitor in use
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About QuinLogic

The Aachen-based company was established in 2008 with the objective to make large volumes of complex measuring data useful for quality management tasks in the steel and aluminum industry, enabling decisive improvements in productivity. The company's team of engineers has more than ten years of experience in the field of surface quality and yield optimization.

Quinlogic cooperates with VDEh-Betriebsforschungsinstitut in Düsseldorf in the fields of data mining and defect diagnosis. It has developed software for rule-based decision-making, which – based on data from most different sources – guarantees optimal use of material.

About Cognex

Cognex Corporation designs, develops, manufactures and markets machine vision sensors and systems, or devices that can "see." Cognex vision sensors and systems are used in factories around the world where they guide, inspect, gauge, identify and assure the quality of a wide range of items during the manufacturing process. Cognex is the world's leader in the machine vision industry, having shipped more than 500,000 machine vision systems, representing over \$2.5 billion in cumulative revenue, since the company's founding in 1981.

Headquartered in Natick, Massachusetts, USA, Cognex has regional offices and distributors located throughout North America, Japan, Europe, Asia and Latin America. For details, visit Cognex on-line at <http://www.cognex.com>.

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